

# Roma Rights

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## snapshots from around Europe

### Killings of Roma in Italy

At approximately 4:00 PM, on May 2, 2002, Mr Baretta Salkanović, a 21-year-old Romani man was shot and killed by an unknown man in the town of Turin in Northern Italy. According to Italian national daily newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera* of May 3, 2002, Mr Salkanović was allegedly stealing tools from a garden, together with Mr Satko Salkanović, a 20-year-old Romani man and Mr Moharem Armetović, a 22-year-old Romani man, in a residential area on the northern periphery of Turin. According to *Il Corriere della Sera*, as the three men were approaching their vehicle, a middle-aged man reportedly got out of his car, walked up to them and allegedly removed a gun from a paper bag. The daily reported that the man shot Salkanović twice in the stomach, from a close range, killing him. He then turned his weapon on Armetović and shot towards his face, grazing his cheek with a bullet. According to the daily, Satko Salkanović reportedly escaped and hid behind an apartment complex, where he alerted the police using his mobile phone.

Media coverage of the killing in Italy has focused primarily on the fact that the Roma were stealing and that the nearby Romani settlement is full of "thieves and criminals". On May 3, the Turin-based national daily newspaper *La Stampa* published an article which suggested that locals, tired of being victims of "nomad criminals", may have taken the situation into their own hands, in an article entitled "An Ambush for a Vendetta: Vindication for too Many Thefts". In a textbox in the same article entitled "Exasperation of the Residents - Theft and Robberies Every Day", Turin residents were quoted as saying, "they (Roma) steal everything and laugh in your face."

On May 24, 2002, the *ERRC* received information that the victims would not pursue justice out of fear of retribution, even though they reportedly recognised the shooter. On June 15, 2002, Giovanni de Sanctis, Deputy Police Chief in Turin, informed the *ERRC* that the investigation into the shooting of Mr Salkanović was ongoing. Turin police were reportedly collaborating with military police (*carabinieri*) in the investigation. As of July 15, 2002, the investigation into the case was ongoing.

In other news, according to *ERRC* field investigation, at approximately 10:00 PM on February 1, 2002, Fabio Halilović, a 16-year-old Romani youth, was fatally shot by Mr D.S., a 42-year-old military police officer of the Tivoli squad, at the police check point near the camp via Salone on the southern periphery of Rome. According to an 8:30 AM update of the Italian national daily newspaper *Il Nuovo* of February 2, 2002, police stated that a car carrying four Romani men refused to stop at the police check-point, and that the driver of the vehicle allegedly put the car in reverse and attempted to run over the two officers at the checkpoint. According to *Il Nuovo*, Officer D.S. allegedly fell to the ground and accidentally fired a shot. According to a police statement in *Il Nuovo*, the bullet entered the back of the car, passed through the passenger's seat and struck Fabio Halilović from behind, passing through his right kidney and heart. However, according to the February 2, 2002 1:50 PM online update of *Il Nuovo*, the vehicle driven by the four Roma slowed down at the police checkpoint inside camp via Salone and continued driving for some metres. *Il Nuovo* reported that the police officers let the car pass but then Officer D.S. got off the police patrol car and shot while standing up. According to testimonies given to the *ERRC* on February 8, 2002, by Mr G.H. and Mrs R.H., Fabio Halilović's parents, the other passengers in the car took him to a local hospital, where he died shortly after his arrival. *Il Nuovo* reported that on February 2, 2002, an investigation into the shooting was opened, undertaken by public investigative magistrate Mr Roberto Staffa. On February 15, 2002, an autopsy was performed on Fabio Halilović's remains. According to information provided to the *ERRC* by Mr Nicolo Paoletti, an attorney following the case, as of June 15, 2002, the investigation was ongoing.

cover  
contents  
editorial  
advocacy  
notebook  
news roundup:  
snapshots from  
around Europe  
legal defence  
grants awarded  
grants  
grants guidelines  
human rights  
education  
romani language  
publications  
testimony  
reaction  
meet the *ERRC*  
chronicle

## snapshots from around Europe

**Romani Man Shot in Macedonia**

A Romani man and a soldier were wounded in an incident that occurred in the training area of the Macedonian Army in the village of Krivolak, central Macedonia, on February 4, 2002, at approximately 6:00 PM. According to an article published on February 6, 2002, in the *Skopje Večer*, the incident took place when an army patrol intercepted a group of Romani civilians who were driving two carts loaded with wood. According to the paper, the patrol asked the group to stop, which they failed to do. As the group continued to approach the patrol, one of the soldiers fired a warning shot in the air. After this, the cart still reportedly continued moving towards the soldiers, and ran over one of them, causing him bodily injury. In response, the other soldiers fired three shots at the group, and wounded a civilian. Both wounded were given first aid and taken to a medical institution in the nearby town of Negotino. However, research of the tip-based *Association for Human Rights Protection of Roma (Zdruzenie za praznena Romite - ARRP)*, an *ERRC* local partner in Macedonia, provided a different account of the same incident. According to eyewitness testimony provided to the *ARRP* on February 11, 2002, Mr Same Abanovski, his son Mr Senad Abanovski, Mr Memet Ametov, Mr Beki Memkov and Sandokan Ustinov were driving two carts loaded with firewood toward their village of Krivolak. On their way, they were met by a group of at least five Macedonian soldiers. The *ARRP* reported that one of the soldiers immediately fired in the air. The patrol then surrounded the carts and directed the Roma to drive towards the military barracks. At a crossroad on the way, the soldiers fired in the air again and scared one of the horses, which caused it to run in the opposite direction, while the cart it dragged ran over one of the soldiers. At this point, the other soldiers from the group reportedly started firing shots, despite shouts from Mr Abanovski, who was in the cart, that they should not do it because it would only scare the horses even more. One of the bullets hit Mr Same Abanovski's right leg under the knee, and he fell out of the cart. As the horse continued running away, the soldiers shot it from behind. According to the testimony given to the *ARRP*, the soldiers refused to assist the wounded Mr Abanovski, used offensive terms against Roma, and then left. Only when another group of soldiers arrived at the spot was a car called to take Mr Abanovski to the Negotino medical centre, from which he was first transported to the town of Veles and later to Skopje, where he was held in a hospital for intensive care and the bullet was removed from his leg. Mr Abanovski remained in hospital until March 4, 2002. According to a certificate issued by the Skopje Medical Center, Mr Abanovski was again hospitalised from March 22, 2002, as a result of his injuries from the shooting. Furthermore, according to a certificate issued by the Negotino Physiotherapy Centre, from March 7 to May 21, 2002, Mr Abanovski underwent intensive therapy for the injuries he sustained as a result of the shooting. The *ARRP* wrote letters to the Ministry of Interior of Negotino on February 13, 2002, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Kavadarci on February 14, 2002, and the Public Prosecutor's Office in Skopje on February 18, 2002. On March 1, 2002, the *ARRP* was informed by the officials of the Ministry of Interior in Negotino that they should refer to the Ministry of Interior of Skopje, while on March 6, they were told by the Public Prosecutor in Skopje that the office of the Ministry of Interior in Negotino was conducting the investigation into the case. As of June 27, 2002, no official decision had been rendered in connection with the case. The *ARRP* is providing legal assistance to the Romani victims of this incident. (*Association for Human Rights Protection of Roma, ERRC, Večer*)

cover

contents

editorial

advocacy

notebook

news roundup:

snapshots from  
around Europe

legal defence

grants awarded

grants

grants guidelines

human rights

education

romani language

publications

testimony

reaction

meet the ERRC

chronicle